

VZCZCXYZ0001
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0961/01 2220949
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 100949Z AUG 09
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2081
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9325
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0759

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000961

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/P, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NORTH KOREA, U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies gave extensive coverage August 7-10 to typhoon Morakot, which hit Taiwan Friday and Saturday, and the record-breaking torrential rains it brought has triggered the most devastating floods in southern Taiwan in the last fifty years. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" continued to discuss former U.S. President Bill Clinton's trip to Pyongyang last Tuesday and the two U.S. reporters freed from North Korea. The column said both Japan and South Korea are afraid that Washington would bypass them and strike a secret deal with Pyongyang. A separate "China Times" op-ed said the meeting between Clinton and North Korean Leader Kim Jong Il is a harbinger for direct and bilateral talks between Washington and Pyongyang. With regard to U.S.-Taiwan relations, an editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" said the opposition DPP should "bolster its presence" in the United States and should take the initiative to remind the Obama administration about "the strategic importance of Taiwan's democracy." End summary.

12. North Korea

A) "Japan and [South] Korea Fear That the United States Would Bypass Them"

The "International Lookout" column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] wrote (8/7):

"[Former U.S. President Bill] Clinton paid a sudden visit to Pyongyang [last week], and South Korea and Japan are probably the ones that were most shocked [by Washington's move]. [They are probably wondering] if the United States will sell them out in terms of [Washington's] North Korea policy. ... On public occasions, take the United Nations' sanctions [against North Korea] as an example, [U.S. President Barack] Obama [tends to] make remarks using high-flown words. For Japan and [South] Korea, needless to say, they would use more bombastic words in order to act in concert [with Washington]. But who knows if there is any secret plan going on behind the scenes? Neither Tokyo nor Seoul had any clue in advance before Clinton flew to Pyongyang. It would be just fine if Clinton were there merely to rescue the two U.S. journalists. But who would believe that Clinton's mission was just for that?

"If Obama were playing a double-faced strategy by making some high-flown remarks on the one hand and seeking compromise [with

Pyongyang] on the other, and if Clinton had reached some kind of an agreement with Kim Jong Il, or the two were planning to push forward some kind of an agreement, then it would be not only bypassing Japan and [South] Korea, but China and Russia would also have to stand off to the side. China and Russia may not care that much, but for Japan and [South] Korea, which constantly speak out against and act in opposition to North Korea, they would find it hard to tolerate."

B) "[Bill] Clinton Rescuing U.S. [Journalists]"

Washington D.C.-based columnist Norman Fu wrote in his column in the

KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] (8/7):

"... Superficially, [former U.S. President Bill] Clinton's trip was a private, humanitarian one aimed at rescuing the two journalists, so the White House has kept a very low-profile, even not saying a word about it. But in reality, the U.S. government has been maneuvering behind the scenes via North Korea's representative to the United Nations. The entire play had been written long in advance, and Clinton was just there to act according to the script. The real, biggest beneficiary is North Korea, because it has been asking to engage in bilateral talks with the United States for many years but has been rejected by Washington, which always insists on conducting the so-called Six-Party talks. Now Clinton, in the capacity of a former [U.S.] president, has had a three-hour-long talk with Kim Jong Il; it seemed quite improbable that they just talked about the release of the two female journalists, and inevitably they would talk about bilateral relations, including Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons. As a result, the Clinton-Kim meeting is a harbinger for direct and bilateral dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang. This may not be a development that Washington is happy to see but, unfortunately, the two female journalists have become the diplomatic bargaining chips that Pyongyang has used to blackmail Washington. The United States, which attaches great importance to human rights and the lives of its people, had no choice but to pay such a price. ..."

13. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

"Obama Needs Reminder of Taiwan's Democracy"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (8/10):

"The opposition Democratic Progressive Party and other pro-democracy

forces in Taiwan must take the initiative to remind the new Democratic administration of United States President Barack Hussein Obama of the strategic importance of Taiwan's democracy. ... Due largely to concerns that Washington was moving closer to Beijing at the expense (sic) of Taiwan's interests for the sake of Bush's misguided 'war on terror,' Chen [Shui-bian] adopted moves to aimed to (sic) consolidate the democratic right of the Taiwan's 23 million people to decide their future, including a referendum on United Nation membership in March 2008. Washington's lack of understanding for such moves contributed to a renewed divergence of U.S.-Taiwan relations and led to transparent moves by senior Bush administration officials to push Taiwan voters to make a 'regime change' in the March 2008 presidential poll.

"In sum, while the concept of 'democracy' appeared to constitute the center of gravity in U.S.-Taiwan relations, the DPP's resolve to ensure the democratic right of the Taiwan people to decide their own future diverged from Bush's narrow definition of Taiwan's role of not obstructing Beijing's cooperation in his 'war on terror.' Regretfully, in its urgency to build constructive relations with Beijing, the Obama administration has not expressed any affirmation of Taiwan's democracy and has not manifested any concern over the regression of Taiwan's democracy under President Ma Ying-jeou's restored rightist KMT government.

"Obsessed with uncritical lauding of the surface (sic) 'cross-strait reconciliation' between the KMT and CCP regimes, the Obama administration has failed to take serious note of grave violations of judicial and human rights in the prosecutions of former DPP officials, including the unjustifiable protracted detention of former president Chen, the KMT's transformation of autonomous state and public-owned news media into party mouthpieces and the absence of transparency or democratic monitoring in KMT-CCP negotiations. Moreover, Ma's refusal to criticize Beijing's violations of human rights in Tibet, Xinjiang and the PRC itself and his purge of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy has signalled (sic) his intention to ensure that neither Taiwan democracy nor human rights violations in the PRC will get in the way of 'linking with China.'

"Continued silence by the Obama government will contrast starkly with Bush's tongue-lashing of the former DPP administration for trying to consolidate Taiwan democracy and will write the Ma government a blank check to do (sic) 'roll back' Taiwan democracy as

far as it wants. At this critical juncture, Taiwan-centric political and social forces need to remind the U.S. and other democracies of the strategic importance of the survival of Taiwan's democracy. ... The DPP in particular should bolster its presence in the U.S., re-energize its Congressional contacts and reach out to grassroots and civic organizations with public diplomacy to constantly remind American society of the uniqueness of Taiwan's democracy and its importance in the defense of democracy in the Asia-Pacific region. ... Such efforts are no less vital than domestic election work since 'linking with democracy' may now be the only path for Taiwan's people to prevent being subsumed into a 'rising authoritarian China.'"

WANG